

# COLLEGE TEXTBOOK READING ATTITUDE SURVEY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ATTITUDE MEASURING TOOL AND VOCABULARY AND READING COMPREHENSION'S IMPACT ON STUDENT TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS

By

JAMES E. GENTRY\*

MELISSA BECKER\*\*

HOLY LAMB\*\*\*

JENIFER MCGREGOR\*\*\*\*

\* Assistant Professor of Curriculum & Instruction, Tarleton State University

\*\* Associate Professor of Curriculum & Instruction, Tarleton State University

\*\*\* Professor of Curriculum & Instruction, Tarleton State University

\*\*\*\* Instructor of Curriculum & Instruction, Tarleton State University

### ABSTRACT

*Attitude toward reading has long proven to be of importance in learning. This study designed a survey instrument for college teachers to gauge future teachers, college students' attitudes toward the reading of textbooks. College students (n=64) responded to two instruments, the newly created survey called the College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey (CTRAS) and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. Both qualitative findings and quantitative results indicated that many college students, future teachers, in the sample have fair to poor attitudes toward reading textbooks and are more apt to exhibit reading comprehension as well as vocabulary deficits. The purpose of the CTRAS instrument was to facilitate a communicative, social learning exchange between college teachers and their students regarding textbook reading and learning. Several recommendations and future research proposals are offered for review.*

*Keywords: Attitude, Survey, Reading, Perceptions, Textbooks, Nelson-Denny, College, Teachers.*

### INTRODUCTION

Past research have connected favorable reading attitude to higher reading achievement as well as the converse, success in reading to the development of positive attitudes toward reading (Almasi 1996; Almasi & McKeown, 1996; Alao & Guthrie, 2000; Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000; Baker, & Wigfield, 1999; Baltas, 1986; Cambourne, 1995; Cambourne, 1999; Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, 2005; Luttrell & Parker, 2001; Mizokawa & Hansen-Krenig, 2000; Morrison, Jacobs, & Swinyard, 1999; Parker & Paradis, 1986; Roettger, Szymczuk, & Millard, 1979). Learning are the connections between the teacher, the student, and the content (Steinberg, 1997). Therefore, education experiences devoted to the development of better attitudes toward reading equals greater chances for meaningful reading engagement and achievement to occur (Guthrie & Wingfield, 1999; Mathewson, 2000). Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker (2000) found the pairing of intrinsic motivation with

scaffolding instructional practices as invaluable support in developing students' positive reading identities. An education system which understands the importance of reading instruction's impact on engaged, motivated reading provides an environment with greater potential in producing successful readers (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997; Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999). A student's attitude towards reading is one of the most important factors a teacher considers when planning instructional interventions to aid learning and reading development (Mathewson, 2000; Vacca & Vacca, 2008). Reading attitude, at times a transcendental phenomenon, and reading instruction recognizing its importance embody reading for many students seeking meaning in the content around them.

Regardless of disability or circumstance, a good attitude has the possibility to circumvent the gravest of language receptive and expression problems (Gentry, 1995). Communication between teachers and students, especially students with disabilities, is desired by both

teachers and students (Adams, Lenz, Loroux, Groner, & Pouliot, 2002). Students socially communicating their learning and reading issues with the primary tool used in classrooms, the textbook, may prove essential for teachers to understand and respond to students learning needs (Vygotsky, 1978). Today content area textbooks remain a major concern for educators at all levels (Vocco & Vocco, 2008). College teachers need tools, open dialogue, and other communication avenues to identify such attitudes in students in order to understand students' perceptions and needs. Therefore, research concerning textbooks and their instructional or communicative influence in the classroom is needed.

Research concerning perceptions toward textbooks is limited. Gentry, Fowler, and Nichols (2007) found parents, students, and teachers wanted individualized textbooks and were dissatisfied with current 6<sup>th</sup> grade social studies textbook choices. This study discussed the possibility of future technology's intervention in creating textbooks that could fit or be manipulated to fit individual preferences one day. The study called for more research regarding textbooks, and their influence on instruction in the classroom.

## Statement of the Problem

Many college students entering the teaching profession may develop or have poor attitudes toward reading the most common tool used in a classroom, the common textbook. Poor vocabulary and/or poor reading comprehension influence one's reading attitude (Mothewson, 2000). Allowing students to discover and talk openly about their perceptions concerning textbooks may initiate dialogue between students and professors of teacher preparation courses that can lead to better textbook choices and new literacy options (e.g., internet, graphic novels, etc.) for introducing a discipline or course content (Gentry, Fowler, and Nichols, 2007). These student teachers who experience this dialogue may bring on open communicative spirit to their new classrooms with openness for using new literacies while introducing learning concepts and content (Vocco and Vocco, 2008). Unfortunately, tools to gauge college students' attitudes toward textbooks do not exist. Therefore, college

teachers and their students would benefit from a tool which initiate discussions concerning reading and learning from textbooks. This study attempts to create such a tool to begin that conversation. Most importantly, college students' perceptions concerning college textbooks need to be voiced and heard by their educators.

## Purpose of the Study

The development of a viable survey instrument to gauge undergraduate college students' (i.e., future teachers) attitudes toward reading content area textbooks was the first goal of this study. Reviewing future teachers' perceptions concerning college textbooks and their use in learning was the second goal. The instrument was designed to initiate informal discussion between students and their teachers/professors concerning reading at the college level. Researchers' third goal was to investigate the impact of undergraduate college students' reading ability with textbook reading attitude scores derived from the instrument. One declaration statement and two questions guided this study:

- a) Develop a survey to accurately measure students' attitudes toward college level textbooks.
- b) Does reading ability (i.e., reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge) impact undergraduate college students' attitudes toward reading college textbooks?
- c) Also, what are some of the perceptions of future teachers concerning college textbooks?

## Method

### Design of the Study

Researchers sought an instrument which could measure college textbook reading attitude and be used as a communication tool between college students and their teachers regarding textbook reading issues. Because no instrument could be found to specifically measure attitude toward textbooks, researchers began a process to construct a valid/reliable instrument to gauge college students' attitude toward textbooks. The study was divided into three main phases: development of the College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey (CTRAS) (See Appendix

A), administration of the Nelson Denny Reading Test (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993), providing the CTRAS for undergraduate students to engage and respond, and final analyses of data with exit interviews of key respondents ( $n=9$ ).

During the instrument development phase, researchers designed the CTRAS by creating survey items based on the BJP Middle/Secondary Reading Attitude Survey (BJPRAS) (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 2004). Researchers then convened a panel of experts in reading instruction and theory. These professionals represented terminal degrees and experience in the disciplines of curriculum and instruction, research administration, and literacy development. Through a six week process, each of five panel members reviewed the appropriateness of the items, style, format, and content of the proposed survey when compared to reading theories and current reading research. The final survey, CTRAS, was corrected and reformatted based on some of the recommendations from the expert panel. The panel individually reviewed the final content of the survey and reported favorable findings to researchers.

As the administration phase began, teacher candidates enrolled in undergraduate Content Area Reading classes told the purpose and reasons driving the study. Students who chose to participate in the study signed a consent form. The students who did not participate in the study completed the same class assignments but their data was not analyzed for study purposes. Of the eighty-three students enrolled in the course, sixty-four students chose to participate in the study.

The CTRAS was administered in a computer lab by means of Internet survey technology while the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (NDRT) (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993) was administered in their individual classes. Students were asked to respond to the items honestly and were reminded that their responses were confidential and would not affect their grades in the course. During the data analyses phase, data was compiled from the survey data and hand scored Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993). All the data were entered using anonymous identification codes into Microsoft

Excel 2007 and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis. Following the administrations of the CTRAS and NDRT, students responded to one question, "What do you think about learning from textbook reading?"

### *Participants*

The study's participants ( $n=64$ ) included students attending a comprehensive regional university in north central Texas. Data were collected from students enrolled in three Content Area Reading classes. These participants were chosen for this study because they represented a diverse population within the College of Education. The course is a requirement for students seeking teacher certification for grades 4-8, 8-12, and all-level certification in content areas including Mathematics, English, Spanish, History, Agricultural Science & Technology, Exercise and Sports Studies, Art, Music, Family Consumer Science, Special Education, and Sciences. Content Area Reading provides students an understanding of factors influencing learning from content texts and teaches specific instructional strategies promoting comprehension, vocabulary development, effective study strategies, and test-taking skills. The course offers teacher candidates methods to modify text for diverse learners and attention is given to principles of research-based reading instruction. The student sample included thirty-nine females and twenty-five males. Students who are certifying in Agricultural Science and Technology and Exercise and Sports Studies represented over half ( $n=60$ ) of those who participated in the study.

### *Quantitative Data Sources*

#### *The BJP Middle/Secondary Reading Attitude Survey:*

The BJP Middle/Secondary Reading Attitude Survey (BJPRAS) was created in 1980 by Scott R. Baldwin, Dale Johnson, and Gary G. Peer for the Educational Development Corporation and was used as a model for the CTRAS. The original version of this reading attitude survey can be obtained from Readence, Bean, and Baldwin (2004, p. 119). The BJP Middle/Secondary Reading Attitude Survey has 20 items for response. Ten of the items are positive while the other ten items are negative in nature. There are four possible responses:



Strangely Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strangely Disagree (SD). Scoring positive items follows the following format: SA=4, A=3, D=2, and SD=1. Scoring the negative items is the exact inverse of the scoring for the positive items. The possible attitude ranges are 60-80=Good, 40-59=Fair, and 20-39=Poor. The original has been used as a valid instrument in past research (Lomax, 1993). Cranbach's Alpha was computed for the BJP Middle/Secondary School Survey revealing high reliability among testing items with a coefficient alpha of ( $=.8738$ ) (Roebke, 1990) (See Appendix A).

## *Development of the College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey:*

Using the format, rating system, scoring solution, and question typology of the BJP Middle/Secondary Reading Attitude Survey (Baldwin, Johnson, & Peer, 1980), the College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey (CTRAS) was developed by researchers as a means to ascertain the textbook reading attitudes of their college students (See Appendix A).

Expert panel members responded to each individual survey item based on Lawshe's (1975) content validity ratio (CVR). For each survey item, raters answered one question, "Is knowledge measured by this question essential/useful or not needed to the operation of the concept?" Panel experts rated each item as not necessary (0), useful (1), or essential (3). Applying Lawshe's CVR formula [ $CVR = (n_e / N/2) / (N/2)$ ] to each survey question, produced a high content validity score of (CVR=1.0) for each of the 20 items used in the survey (DeVon, Block, Moyle-Wright et al. 2007; Pennington, 2003). Therefore, final reports from panel members demonstrated that 100% of the survey items can be directly traced to a guiding philosophy, theory, and research in reading. In addition, 100% of the five members of the expert panel agreed that the survey was not biased by theoretical or research misunderstandings. These findings indicate content validity was judged to be high. Also, high reliability among testing items with a Cranbach Alpha coefficient of ( $=.875$ ) was reported.

## *The Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Form G):*

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Form G) was developed

in 1991-1992 as an extended-time means to properly assess a student's reading ability in three related areas: reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and reading rate. The test was standardized using samples representing geographic region, enrollment records, school types (high school, two year colleges, and four year colleges), and socio-economic status of community. Studies using two previous valid/reliable Nelson-Denny Reading Test forms, Forms E and F, as comparisons found Forms G and H to be valid/reliable measures as well. High correlations were found between Form G and Form E for Vocabulary, comprehension, composite [total], and reading rate: ( $r=.86, .76, .86, \text{ and } .68$ ), respectively (Brawn, Fishca, & Hanna, 1993).

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test may be used as an instrument aiding student class placement decisions. For example, a student may be placed in developmental reading vs. advanced reading classes based on testing results. The data may provide educators insight to develop individualized curriculum, class advising, and text options. Data was designed to provide educators an individualized report for understanding, meeting, and extending a student's reading ability.

## *Qualitative Data Source*

Three groupings were determined by students' responses to CTRAS: Good, fair, and poor. Students' responses to the exit question, "What do you think about learning from textbook reading?" were reviewed holistically to gather a sense of students' perceptions from each grouping. Since only three students were found to have good attitudes towards textbooks, researchers wanted to review three students per remaining fair and poor CTRAS groupings ( $n=6$ ). These key respondents per CTRAS grouping were chosen using three criteria: top score, median score, and lowest score.

## *Data Analysis*

### *Analysis of the College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey:*

Researchers retrieved subjects per question ratings on CTRAS (See Appendix A) from the university's survey database. The sum of the scores formed an interval scale

as the measure of textbook reading attitude. Subjects were placed in one of three attitude categories based on their score: 60-80=Good, 40-59=Fair, and 20-39=Poor.

## *Analysis of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Form G):*

Researchers scored subjects' tests following the scoring solutions delineated by the Nelson-Denny test (Brown, Fishca, & Hanna, 1993). Five scales, raw, percentile rank, scale, grade equivalent, and stanine scores, were obtained for two areas of reading ability: vocabulary and comprehension. These scales formed scales of measures representing vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, respectively.

## *College Textbook Reading Attitude by Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension Comparisons:*

Two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted using Nelson-Denny vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension percentile rank scores as measurement variables. Leven's tests for homogeneity of variance were calculated for ANOVAs to determine if equal variance could be assumed. Effect size measures of eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) as well as Tukey and Tamhane  $T^2$  post hoc tests were computed. Effect size and power were reported.

## *Student Responses to Exit Question:*

(What do you think about learning from textbook reading?). Following the narrative tradition of qualitative research, college students' responses were respected as a culmination of life experience with textbooks and therefore holistic review of students' statements were warranted (Beattie, Dabsan, Tharntan, Hegge, 2007). Researchers wanted to avoid bias and allow student voices representing each CTRAS attitude rating (good, fair, or poor); therefore, students statements were not altered and were reported word for word for readers to interpret, in vivo style (Kelle, 1997). Responses of students' were reported using in vivo coding with commentary presented by researchers.

## **Results**

### *Descriptive Statistics:*

Subjects (N=65) fell into attitude ratings for good, fair, and poor (3=n), (49=n), and (12=n), respectively. The means

and standard deviations (SD) by vocabulary and reading comprehension for each student attitude category were (a) good attitude 91.33 (SD=2.3)/96.3 (SD=2.5), (b) fair attitude 42.71 (SD=26.8)/51.4 (SD=27.9), and (c) poor attitude 36.66 (SD=18.6)/29.6 (SD=17.6), respectively.

## *Student Textbook Attitude by Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension Mean Comparisons:*

Leven's tests were significant and indicated homogeneity of variance could not be assumed. Because equal homogeneity of variances could not be assumed for vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, Tamhane's  $T^2$  post hoc tests were used for comparisons. College textbook reading attitudes of undergraduate college students were significant factors impacting vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension [ $F(2,61)=5.895, p=.005$ ] and [ $F(2,61)=8.579, p=.001$ ], respectively (Table 1 and 2). Both vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension produced large effect sizes: .162 and .220, respectively. Therefore, 16% of the variance in students' vocabulary knowledge scores could be accounted for by students' attitude toward textbook reading while 22% of the variance in students' reading comprehension scores could be accounted for by students' attitude toward textbook reading. The observed power of capturing a true difference was high for both vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension comparisons to textbook reading attitudes with 86% and 96%, respectively.

Tamhane  $T^2$  post hoc tests indicated significant differences ( $p<.05$ ) between attitude groupings for both

	Source	df	F	p	$\eta^2$
Nelson-Denny Vocabulary Knowledge Scores	Between	2	5.895	.005	.162
	Within	61			
	Total	64			

Table 1. ANOVA Statistics for Textbook Reading Attitude by Vocabulary Knowledge

	Source	df	F	p	$\eta^2$
Nelson-Denny Reading Comprehension Scores	Between	2	8.579	.001	.220
	Within	61			
	Total	64			

Table 2. ANOVA Statistics for Textbook Reading Attitude by Reading Comprehension

vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension measures. Only the comparison between fair to poor textbook reading attitudes for the vocabulary knowledge measure proved not to be significant. The 95% confidence intervals for vocabulary knowledge overlapped with two textbook attitude groups: fair (49 to 35) and poor (51 to 22). The good attitude outpaced the remaining two groups (120 to 62) (Figure 1).

The 95% confidence intervals for the reading comprehension measure by textbook attitudes of good, fair, and poor ranged from 126 to 66, 58 to 44.07, and 44.60 to 14, respectively. Slight overlap occurred in the lower bound of fair (44.07) and the upper bound of poor (44.60) (Figure 2).

## **Key-Respondents Responses to Exit Question: (What do you think about learning from textbook reading?).**

The three students from the CTRAS good, fair, and poor respective groupings responded to the exit question with the following statement from the high (H-S), median score (M-S) to low score (L-S), respectively:

### *Good~CTRAS Rating*

H-S: I like the environment for learning. The textbook is one piece but needed because it is usually a tabulation of all that is needed for the subject or field I want to be employed in one day. Textbooks provide me organization to my thoughts and allow me to revisit them when I am thinking about the content or need clarification. So... Textbooks are a vital tool for initiating discussions and allowing us to see what ideas and issues have come before us in our chosen field.

M-S: The textbook is like collaboration with other professionals in my field, as well as the ability to learn theory and strategies associated with education. It is needed. I think.

L-S: [Textbooks] they give me a sense of achievement on my education and furthering my mind. I read them and understand it. This is fulfillment and I seek this just as much as I seek my diploma.

### *Fair~CTRAS Rating*

H-S: I am in my upper classes, I love learning about things that will actually relate to my future. Textbooks are not always that for me. We need to be able to select textbook that fit our future work.

M-S: Going to classes that seem to be a waste of my time if it is in the textbook. I don't read them all the time. I want someone to tell me what is needed instead of wasting my time reading a textbook. Reading some material is a waste of time because it is all common sense.

L-S: College is about freedom. Reading textbooks is extremely hard.

### *Poor~CTRAS Rating*

H-S: Having to pay so much money for them [textbooks] and classes that I will never need is bad.

M-S: Some teachers assign reading from the textbook and test rather than teaching us and testing on what they teach.

L-S: How long does it take to get a degree with all this reading... Reading [textbooks] can be a lot.

Interestingly, students in the good CTRAS grouping portrayed more positive perceptions concerning textbooks and learning with textbooks than the fair and poor groupings. Also, noticeable, the student with the H-S within the good CTRAS group used more words ( $n=86$ ) than the others in the response. Those with poor CTRAS ratings raised issues like the cost of textbooks and the sense that reading textbooks seemed empty of learning and not a meaningful learning experience. The overall narratives provided by students in response to the exit question provided the ideas and thinking behind their respective ratings.

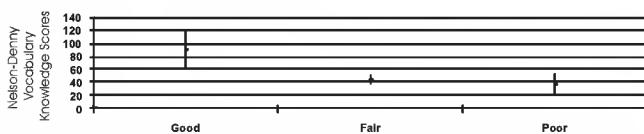


Figure 1. 95% Confidence Intervals for Vocabulary Knowledge Percentile Rank Scores by College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey Rating

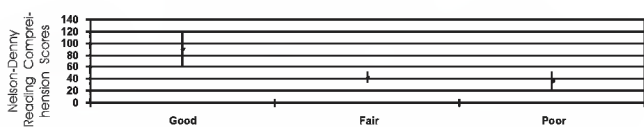


Figure 2. 95% Confidence Intervals for reading Comprehension Percentile Rank Scores by College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey Rating



## General Discussion & Thoughts

Many college teachers may not be surprised by the findings of this study. Over the years, teachers encounter college students with negative attitudes towards reading textbooks. However, the actual differences between college students' attitudes toward college level textbooks and reading ability, specifically in the areas of comprehension and vocabulary is new information. The law scores on the NDRT (Brawn, Fishca, & Hanna, 1993), and the significant differences between students with good versus fair or poor attitudes regarding college textbooks may reveal a disturbing fact many of college students do not read well. Therefore, if educators focused on comprehension and vocabulary development as well as improving students' attitudes toward the textbook genre, reading abilities and possibly attitudes towards reading, even the reading of those dreaded textbooks, may improve. Our hope, as researchers, is to see the CTRAS used as a communication tool concerning reading college textbooks with college counselors and teachers. Perhaps discussions could lead to the uncovering and possible improvement for those facing reading challenges and poor attitudes concerning college textbook reading. The key respondents with CTRAS poor ratings from H-S to L-S in this study reported textbooks as not being an important part to their learning. The M-S key respondent within the poor grouping stated the preference for oral communication of the content versus reading a textbook. These comments are telling. If comments like these were allowed in open communication between teachers and students during private conferences while reviewing CTRAS scores, plans for reading tutoring and/or alternative texts or even a sense of being heard and understood could be accomplished and realized. Communication which leads to careful/purposeful instruction and textbook selection may be appreciated by students who struggle to read college textbooks.

Educators of every discipline must be aware of the discipline-specific terminology and take steps to guarantee students understand the vocabulary. College professors and teachers may erroneously assume

students know how to use a textbook to gain understanding of a given discipline. Therefore, the genre of textbooks and discipline specific vocabulary should be taught in all disciplines, P-16. Intentionally relating textbooks assignments to real-world application would assist students in making a connection to the textbook readings. Shorter reading assignments and a stronger emphasis on authentic application to individual teaching fields would support the college student as he/she interprets the potential value of the text presented. Authentic learning would then easily dovetail with reading assignment for meaningful application. Application is important for all students, but the vast majority of the teacher candidates who participated in the study were Agriculture Science and Physical Education majors. Application may be even more critical for this population. The content interest of these students could play a role in their interest and attitude toward the more passive activity of reading (Gardner, 1999). These students' learning needs are probably reflected in their selection of their future teaching field.

## Limitations

The study was conducted for only one semester within several sections of the same course. The university is a small regional university. Initially, the findings would be applicable to other regional universities with large numbers of Agriculture Science and Physical Education teacher candidates. In order to apply the findings to a more diverse population of college students, a larger number of participants should be recruited from a number of courses across a campus. Enlarging the scope of participants and university settings would strengthen the study. Although one of the groupings in CTRAS's attitude groupings was small {i.e., good (n=3)}, qualitative data (i.e., in vivo coding) strengthens the statistically significant finding.

## Conclusions

College students who lacked vocabulary and comprehension skills developed negative attitudes toward reading college texts. Poor attitudes toward reading college textbooks may predispose students to

lower vocabulary and comprehension ability as well. Poor attitudes concerning the reading of textbooks at the college level are symptomatic of vocabulary as well as comprehension difficulties. In many university classrooms, college teachers may depend heavily on the information contained in course textbooks. College teachers identifying students with poor attitudes toward textbooks and poor reading ability early in the semester is a necessity. In order to recommend such students for tutorials or other supporting resources which scaffold the social learning of the content at hand, college teachers and their students benefit by knowing their students (Vygotsky, 1978). CTRAS and other diagnostic test aid in this undertaking. The CTRAS is a tool to initiate discussions and communicate learning and reading concerns between college students and their teachers. These discussions could lead to remedial actions and improved understating of students' reading/learning perceptions and needs (Adams, Lenz, Laroux, Graner, & Pouliot, 2002). As college teachers assign textbook readings to students with negative attitudes, the students may be at risk for learning failure. Students and adults desire more from textbooks (Gentry, Fowler, and Nichols, 2007). College textbooks need to be evaluated and discussed for change with textbooks to be initiated.

If students cannot understand the vocabulary nor comprehend the information contained in the textbook, other options must be considered to avoid failure. Options include explaining key features of a course textbook, providing key word lists and reading guides are but a few strategies which assist learning. Social learning options (Vygotsky, 1978) include reading assignments with a more knowledgeable peer or using book clubs or literature circles for students to discuss learning and vocabulary from readings. As these adjustments are made in a course, a positive attitude may develop and encourage students to participate in the social, learning community of the college classroom. This modeling of communicative dialogue about textbook reading and actions to enhance textbook engagement and learning of content by college teachers can provide a positive model for future teachers to emulate in our public

schools. The use of intervention or remediation methods to improve textbook reading attitude or reading ability of college students were beyond the scope of this study. However, further research involving possible social learning methods or interventions to confront poor attitudes of undergraduate college students with poor reading ability is needed.

## Future Studies

Alternative formats for textbooks are an area for future study. Some teachers use alternative mediums to supplement or replace traditional textbooks. These include the internet, computer programs, text written in a comic book style, etc. With a population of students that have been raised with technology it may be important to consider new options to textbooks. Also, case study research concerning discussions between teachers and students concerning reading college level texts could be of value. The CTRAS could be a tool to initiate discussions in the class concerning reading college level texts and content learning. Future comparisons using the CTRAS are needed to further its validity and reliability as a tool to gage college students reading attitudes towards college level textbooks. Implications of future teachers' first year teaching efficacy with good, fair, or poor reading attitudes towards textbooks could be studied.

## References

- [1]. Adams, G., Lenz, K., Laroux, M., Graner, P., & Pouliot, N. (2002). *The Effects of Ongoing Communication between Teachers and Adolescents with Disabilities*. Research No. NCRTL-RR-12). Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas and the Institute for Academic Access. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed469545)
- [2]. Alao, S., & Guthrie, J. T. (1999). Predicting conceptual understanding with cognitive and motivational variables. *Journal of Educational Research*, 92(4), 243-253.
- [3]. Almasi, J.F. (1996). A new view of discussion. In L.B. Gambrell & J.F. Almasi (Eds.), *Lively discussions: Fostering engaged reading* (pp. 2-24). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- [4]. Almasi, J. F. & McKeown, M. G. (1996). The nature of engaged reading in classroom discussions of literature.



*Journal of Literacy Research* 28(1), 107-146.

[5]. Baker, L., & Wigfield, A. (1999). Dimensions of Children's Motivation for Reading and Their Relations to Reading Activity and Reading Achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(4), 452-477.

[6]. Baker, L., Dreher, M. J., & Guthrie, J. T. (2000). Why teachers should promote reading engagement. In L. Baker, M. J. Dreher, & J.T. Guthrie (Eds.), *Engaging young readers* (pp.1-16). New York: The Guilford Press.

[7]. Baker, L., Dreher, M. J., & Guthrie, J. T., (Eds.). (2000). *Engaging young readers: Promoting achievement and motivation*. New York: The Guilford Press.

[8]. Baldwin R., Johnson, D., & Peer, G. (1980). *Bookmatch*. Tulsa, OK: Educational Development Corporation.

[9]. Baltas, J. G. (1986). An investigation of the variables related to reading performance of good and poor readers who are pre-service teachers as predictors of reading achievement (metacognition, attitudes, habits). (Doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 47/04.

[10]. Beattie, M., Dobson, D., Thornton, G., Hegge, L. (2007). Interacting narratives: Creating and re-creating the self. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 26(2), 119-141.

[11]. Brown, J.I., Fishco, V.V., & Hanna, G. (1993). *Nelson-Denny reading test: Manual for scoring and interpretation (forms G & H)*. Itasca, IL: Riverside Publishing/Houghton Mifflin.

[12]. Cambourne, B. (1995). Towards an educationally relevant theory of literacy learning: Twenty years of inquiry. *The Reading Teacher*, 49(3), 182-190.

[13]. Cambourne, B. (1999). Conditions for literacy learning: Turning learning theory into classroom instruction. A minicase study. *The Reading Teacher*, 53(5), 126-127.

[14]. DeVon, H. Block, M. E., Moyle-Wright, P., Ernst, D. M., Hayden, S. J., Lazzara, D. J., Savoy, S. M., & Kostas-Polston, E. (2007). A psychometric toolbox for testing

validity and reliability. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 39(2), 155-164.

[15]. Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. New York: Basic Books.

[16]. Gentry, J. (1995). Willie the worm and dyslexia: A 17-year follow-up. *Journal of Child Neurology*, 10 (1), S106-S107.

[17]. Gentry, J., Fowler, T. & Nichols, B. (2007). Textbook Preferences: The Possibilities of Individualized Learning in Social Studies with an Individualized Textbook. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 18(4), 493-510.

[18]. Guthrie, J. T., & Alvermann, D. E. (Eds.). (1999). *Engaged reading: Process, practices, and policy implications*. New York: Teachers College.

[19]. Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (Eds.). (1997). *Reading engagement: Motivating readers through integrated instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

[20]. Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (1999). How motivation fits into a science of reading. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 3(3), 199-207.

[21]. Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., VonSecker, C. (2000) Effects of integrated instruction on motivation and strategy use in reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(2), 331-341.

[22]. Kush, J. C., Watkins, M. W., & Brookhart, S. M. (2005). The temporal-interactive influence of reading achievement and reading attitude. *Educational Research & Evaluation*, 11(1), 29-44.

[23]. Lawshe, C.H. (1975). A quantitative approach to content validity. *Personnel Psychology*, 28, 563-575.

[24]. Lomax, M.E. (1993). To choose or not to choose: The effect of varied influences on the selection of library books by junior high school students. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1994). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 55(01), 121A.

[25]. Luttrell, W. & Parker, C. (2001). High school students' literacy practices and identities, and the figured world of school. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24(3), 235-247.

[26]. Mathewson, G.C. (2000). Model of attitude

influence upon reading and learning to read. In R.B. Ruddell, M.R. Ruddell, & S. Harry (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 1131-1159). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

[27]. Mizokawa, D. T. & Hansen-Krening, N. (2000). The ABC's of attitude toward reading: Inquiring about the reader's response. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 44(1), 72-79.

[28]. Morrison, T. G., Jacobs, J. S., & Swinyard, W. (1999). Do teachers who read personally use recommended literacy practices in their classrooms? *Reading Research and Instruction*, 38(2), 81-100.

[29]. Parker, A., Paradis, E. (1986). Attitude development toward reading in grades one through six. *Journal of Educational Research*, 79, 313-315.

[30]. Pennington, D. (2003). *Essential Personality*. London, England: Oxford University/Hodder Arnold.

[31]. Readence, J.E., Bean, T. W., Baldwin, R. S. (2004). *Content area literacy: An integrated approach* (8th ed). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

[32]. Roebke, J. (1990). *A descriptive and observational study of curricular change in English: Teacher*

*perceptions and student attitudes and behavior*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

[33]. Roettger, D., Szymczuk, M. & Millard, J. (1979). Validation of a reading attitude scale for elementary students and an investigation of the relationship between attitude and achievement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 72(3), 138-142.

[34]. Steinberg, L. (1997). *Beyond the classroom: Why school reform has failed and what parents need to do*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

[35]. Kelle, U. (1997). Theory building in qualitative research and computer programs for the management of textual data *Sociological Research Online*, 2(2), Retrieved January 12, 2009, from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/2/1.html>

[36]. Vacca, R.T. & Vacca, J. L. (2008). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

[37]. Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. (M.Cole, V.John-Steiner, S.Scribner & E. Souberman, Eds. & Translators). Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1934)

## Appendix A. College Textbook Reading Attitude Survey(CTRAS)~College Students

Directions: This survey tells how you experience reading as a college student. This is not a test and is anonymous. Your progress in college will not be affected. This will help colleges create better classes.

Answer honestly by marking the level that corresponds best with your feelings concerning the statements below.

LEVEL OF FEELING  
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

1. Textbooks are dull.
2. The assigned textbooks are too difficult for me to read.
3. I read chapters in my textbooks that are not always assigned by the professor.
4. I am able to read my textbooks with ease.
5. I do not read everything a professor assigns me to read.
6. Sometimes I do not feel the need to buy the required textbook(s) for a class.
7. I enjoy reading my textbooks.
8. When compared to other students, I seem to know all the vocabulary used in the textbook.
9. I do not have enough time to read my required assignments for class.
10. I need others to help me understand what I am reading from textbooks.
11. I like to take notes while I read my textbooks, so I can remember what I read.
12. I like it when I get to share what I learned from my readings with others.
13. Professors require some readings that are unnecessary.

# RESEARCH PAPERS

14. I do not learn much from reading the textbook.
15. Assigned class readings helps me understand what I will need as a professional.
16. I mostly make A's and B's on tests that are based on information from the textbook.
17. I like it when I have time to read my textbooks.
18. Reading gets tiresome after about ten minutes with a textbook.
19. Sometimes I get poor grades on tests that are based on information from a textbook.
20. I look forward to reading my textbooks.

\*Scoring: For items 3,4,7,8,11,12,15,16,17, and 20 give four points for SA, three points for an A, two points for a D, and one point for a SD. For items 1,2,5,6,9,10,13,14,18, and 19, score four points for a SD, three for a D, two for A, and one for SA. Scores can range from 20 to 80.

↓↓ Score ↓↓

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

*Dr. James E. Gentry is an Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Tarleton State University. He serves as the Assistant Editor of the Journal of the Effective Schools Project. He has served students and their families for seventeen years.*



*Dr. Melissa Becker is an Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Tarleton State University. She has worked with public schools for 20 years. Her current research interest includes Technology integration in diverse classrooms.*



*Dr. Lamb is a Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Tarleton State University. She has served public schools and Higher Education for 28 years. Her specialties are Early Childhood Education and Reading Instruction.*



*Ms. McGregor is an Instructor of Curriculum and Instruction. She has served the public schools and Higher Educational Settings for 15 years. She is interested in Content Literacy And Adolescent/adult Literacy.*

